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REF: KABUL 2450

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. SUMMARY: SOVIET HEAVY AIR TRANSPORT AND HELICOPTER ACTIVITY AND CONVOY TRAFFIC THROUGH KABUL INCREASED MARKEDLY AGAIN AUGUST 29 AMID REPORTS OF FRESH FIGHTING IN SEVERAL PARTS OF AFGHANISTAN. LENGTHY BOUTS OF ARTILLERY FIRING WERE ALSO HEARD NEAR THE KHAIR KHANA AREA OF KABUL ON AUGUST 29 AND 30, BUT WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO DETERMINE THE TARGETS. DRA OFFICIALS TOOK FURTHER POT SHOTS AT PAKISTAN DURING THE ANNUAL "PASH-TUNISTAN NATIONAL DAY" CELEBRATIONS AGAUST 30 AND 31. WE HAVE RECEIVED A REPORT THAT "HUNDREDS" OF WOULD BE REFUGEES HAVE BEEN INCARCERATED IN A DESERT CAMP NEAR THE PAKISTAN BORDER. ONLY A FEW AFGHAN MILITARY OFFICERS APPEARED AT A TURKISH ARMED FORCES DAY RECEPTION AUGUST 30. END SUMMARY.

3. SOVIET HEAVY AIR TRANSPORTS, MOSTLY AN-12'S, BUT INCLUDING AN-22'S AND IL-76'S, HAVE ONCE AGAIN LINED PARKING APRONS AT KABUL AIRPORT AND ROARED OVERHEAD MOST OF THE DAY SINCE AUGUST 29. FROM THE LITTLE EMBOFFS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO OBSERVE, A PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE INCREASED ACTIVITY IS TROOP ROTATION. WE SAW OVER A DOZEN GAZ TRUCKS DISGORGE SOVIETS IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES WITH SUITCASES AT THE LOADING RAMPS OF SIX AN-12'S ON AUGUST 29. LATER, EIGHT GAZ TRUCKS WERE SEEN HEADING INTO KABUL CARRYING UNIFORMED TROOPS GAWKING AND POINTING AT THE SCENERY.

4. SOVIET HELICOPTER TRAFFIC INCREASED THE SAME DAY AND HAS CONTINUED INTO AUGUST 31. MI-8 AND MI-24 HELICOPTER GUNSHIPS HAVE BEEN SIGHTED GOING TO AND COMING FROM THREE GENERAL AREAS
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-- NORTH TOWARD PARMAN PROVINCE, SOUTHWEST TOWARD GHAZNI AND SOUTH TOWARD LOGAR. MODERATE-SIZED TRUCK CONVOYS, SOME ACCOMPANIED BY APC'S, HAVE BEEN SEEN TRAVELING TO AND FROM THE SAME DIRECTIONS. FROM 0830 TO 0930 ON AUGUST 29 AND AGAIN FROM 0900 TO ABOUT 1130 ON AUGUST 30, IRREGULAR ROUNDS OF ARTILLERY WERE HEARD NEAR THE KABUL AIRPORT, PROBABLY IN THE VICINITY OF LARGE SOVIET TENT CAMPS AT KHAIR KHANA. THE FIRING COULD HAVE BEEN PRACTICE, ALTHOUGH NONE OF THE USUAL PRIOR ANNOUNCEMENTS WERE MADE. ~~ON THE OTHER HAND...~~ WE HAVE NOT AS YET RECEIVED ANY REPORTS OF FIGHTING IN THE AREA. (SUCH REPORTS

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GENERALLY REACH US WITHIN HOURS.)

5. THIS ACTIVITY HAS TAKEN PLACE AMID DOZENS OF REPORTS OF FRESH FIGHTING IN SEVERAL AREAS OF THE COUNTRY. A VISITING TELEVISION PHOTOGRAPHER (STRICTLY PROTECT) WITH EXCELLENT CONTACTS AMONG THE HUAJAHEDDI KINFORMED US THAT HE HAS BEEN BLOCKED FROM LEAVING KABUL IN ANY DIRECTION FOR THE PAST WEEK BECAUSE OF RENEWED FIGHTING (AND CONSEQUENT CONCENTRATIONS OF SOVIET TROOPS) IN THE PANJSHER VALLEY NORTHEAST OF KABUL, IN WARDAK AND GHAZNI PROVINCES TO THE SOUTHWEST AND SOMEWHERE ALONG THE ROADS LEADING EAST TO JALALABAD AND SOUTH TO LOGAR PROVINCE. HE AND OTHERS (INCLUDING THE DRA MEDIA) HAVE ALSO MENTIONED FRESH BATTLES IN BAMIYAN AND KANDAHAR. WE ASSUME THAT MOST OF THIS ACTIVITY IS TAKING PLACE SOME DISTANCE FROM KABUL BECAUSE SOVIET ARMOR HAS BEEN REMOVED FROM ROADBLOCKS LEADING INTO THE CITY FROM EVERY DIRECTION.

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 IO-14 ADS-00 SY-05 SYE-00
DCT-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PH-07 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00
INRE-00 SHS-01 ACDA-12 OCS-06 CA-01 AID-07 /121 W
-----093930 311427Z /43

O 311200Z AUG 80
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8056
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY BEIJING
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY Dacca
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA /
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USICA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
/CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
CINCEUR VAIHENGEN GE
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE

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6. THE MOST DETAILED REPORT WE HAVE RECEIVED OF THESE
EVENTS CAME FROM WARDAK PROVINCE, WHERE RESISTANCE FIGHTERS
AGAIN APPARENTLY MINED A HIGHWAY AT A DEFILE NAMED BOOM.
THE LOCAL RESIDENTS, WHO ALLEGEDLY WERE WORKING WITH KHALQI
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DESERTERS IN JULY, WERE REPORTEDLY ANGERED WHEN SOME OF THE
KHALQIS FINGERED MUHAMMAD FOR THE SOVIETS AND PAKISTAN

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IRREGULARS DURING THE SWEEP OF THAT AREA SEVERAL WEEKS AGO. SINCE THEN, THEY APPARENTLY EMBARKED ON AN ASSASSINATION CAMPAIGN AGAINST THEIR ERSTWHILE KHALQI ALLIES. IN THE PROCESS, THEY MANAGED TO STEAL SOME EXPLOSIVES FROM DRA FACILITIES AND MINED THE ROAD THROUGH THE DEFILE, SETTING OFF THE CHARGES WHEN A SMALL SOVIET CONVOY TRANSITTED LATE LAST WEEK.

7. WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO CONFIRM SEVERAL REPORTS THAT A FAIRLY LARGE STRETCH OF THE KABUL-JALALABAD HIGHWAY WAS DESTROYED BY MUJAHEDDIN LAST WEEK, EITHER BY BLOWING UP A BRIDGE, OR BY CAUSING A MAJOR LANDSLIDE. WE TEND TO BELIEVE ANOTHER REPORT THAT THE DRA ACCOUNTS OFFICE AND A LOCAL CINEMA WERE BURNED BY RESISTANCE GROUPS IN KANDAHAR A FEW DAYS AGO.

8. THE SOURCE OF THE LATTER INFORMATION, AN OFTEN RELIABLE AFGHAN, ALSO RELAYED A REPORT FROM A RELATIVE IN THE AFGHAN ARMY, WHO TRIED ON AUGUST 24 TO FLEE WITH SEVERAL OF HIS BUDDIES TO PAKISTAN FROM KANDAHAR. ACCORDING TO THE RELATIVE, HE AND HIS FRIENDS COMMANDEERED AN ARMY TRUCK AND HEADED TOWARD SPIN BULOAK AND THE BORDER. HOWEVER, BEFORE REACHING SPIN BULOAK, THEY ENCOUNTERED A HEAVY CONCENTRATION OF SOVIETS. UPON FURTHER INVESTIGATION THEY FOUND A CAMP IN THE DESERT, SURROUNDED BY SOVIET TROOPS, IN WHICH THEY CLAIMED TO SEE "HUNDREDS" OF AFGHAN FAMILIES CAMPED IN SQUALID CONDITIONS. DISCREET CONTACT WITH A LOCAL MAN CONVINCED THEM THAT THE CAMP WAS MADE UP OF AFGHANS WHO HAD BEEN CAUGHT WHILE TRYING TO FLEE TO PAKISTAN. ACCORDINGLY, THEY RETURNED (APPARENTLY UNNOTICED) TO KANDAHAR AND ABANDONED THEIR ESCAPE PLANS.

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9. THE SAME SOURCE CLAIMED THAT AN ARMY DOCTOR FRIEND TOLD HIM AUGUST 27 THAT MANY DEAD SOVIET TROOPS WERE NOW BEING BURIED IN AFGHANISTAN AND THAT ALL WOUNDED SOVIET TROOPS WHO NEED SPECIALIZED ATTENTION ARE BEING SENT TO MILITARY HOSPITALS IN EASTERN EUROPE. THE OPINION IN AFGHAN ARMY CIRCLES OF THESE PROCEDURES IS THAT MOSCOW IS TRYING TO AVOID FURTHER DISCONTENT AMONG SOVIET CITIZENS BY HIDING FROM THEM THE EXTENT OF RED ARMY CASUALTIES.

10. THE DRA ~~WICKED OFF ITS ANNUAL PAKHTUNISTAN NATIONAL~~

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DAY" CELEBRATIONS WITH A DOUBLE EDITION OF THE KABUL NEW TIMES FEATURING THE "PASHTUNISTAN" FLAG ON AUGUST 30. THE PRESS AND KABUL TV CARRIED PHOTOGRAPHS OF NONAGERIAN PASHTUN LEADER KHAN ABDOUL GHAFAR KHAN, HIS SON ABDOUL WALI AND EXILED "POET" AJMAL KHATTACK. BABRAK KARMAH WAS SEEN TALKING TO GHAFAR KHAN, WHO WAS REPORTED TO HAVE ANNOUNCED THAT HE PLANS TO TRAVEL "SOON" TO THE USSR FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT AND TO HAVE CALLED FOR AN END TO "MISUNDERSTANDINGS" AMONG COUNTRIES OF THE REGION. THE STANDARD FLAG RAISING CEREMONY AND SPEECHES WERE HELD EARLY AUGUST 31 AT KABUL'S PASHTUNISTAN SQUARE. THERE AND IN THE OTHER PUBLIC PRO- NOUNCEMENTS, GENERAL ZIA'S GOVERNMENT WAS ACCORDED A THOROUGH LAMBASTING. (COMMENT: WHILE SUCH ATTACKS ON ISLAMABAD ARE CUSTOMARY AT THESE EVENTS, THIS YEAR'S LANGUAGE WAS STRONGER THAN USUAL, FITTING IN WITH THE SOVIET AND AFGHAN ANTI-ZIA CAMPAIGN THAT HAS BEEN UNDERWAY IN RECENT DAYS.)

11. THE TURKISH MILITARY ATTACHE HELD A RECEPTION TO CELEBRATE HIS COUNTRY'S ARMED FORCES DAY ON AUGUST 30. THE ONLY OFFICIAL AFGHANS VISIBLE WERE FIVE OR SIX ARMY OFFICERS IN UNIFORM, ALL FROM THE PROTOCOL OFFICE OF THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE. THE ATTACHE TOLD GUESTS THAT HE HAD SENT "ABOUT 25" INVITATIONS TO THE MINISTRY FOR MINISTER RAFIE, CHIEF OF STAFF LT. GENERAL BABA JAN AND SEVERAL OTHER SENIOR
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OFFICERS, BUT THAT HE HAD RECEIVED WORD THAT EACH OF THEM WAS "OUT OF TOWN." HE CLAIMED TO KNOW THAT MANY OF THEM WERE ACTUALLY IN KABUL, AND SPECULATED THAT THEY HAD REBUFFED HIM BECAUSE HE FAILED TO ATTEND SOME OF THEIR RECENT FUNCTIONS. THE ENTIRE MILITARY ATTACHE STAFF OF THE SOVIET EMBASSY, ON THE OTHER HAND, TURNED OUT IN FULL DRESS UNIFORMS. NO SENIOR DRA CIVILIAN OFFICIALS WERE OBSERVED. GRIFFIN

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